

# CAREER NEWSFLASH



## MMEA-64

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## EDITORIAL



The CY-2003 E-8/E-9 Selection Board has recently adjourned and it is important to contrast this with trends seen on previous boards. The number of Marines being considered In Zone that did not have the requisite PME for the next higher grade was still about the same. There have not been any changes to the PME requirements for good period of time now and one wonders what it will take to get the message through to all Marines, NO PME, NO PROMOTION. It is that simple. This is not about over and above qualifications to increase your competitiveness. PME completion is the bare minimum that will allow you to be fully considered fully qualified.

Digital photographs now have a 'shelf life' of 12 months. Therefore, any reason for failing to submit a photograph as required is hard to accept. We recommend you

always have a good promotion photograph in your OMPF, whether or not you are eligible for promotion. You never know if you will be considered for promotion from the Below Zone (ahead of your peers), and a picture is worth more than a thousand words as we often say. If you do not have the capability to submit a digital photograph, good Polaroid photograph. The bottom line is to show an active interest in your own career, your records are your official resume and represent you completely to the selection boards.

The issue here is if our *Senior Enlisted Leadership* cannot lead by example from the front, how can we expect the rest to follow suit? Considering the time in grade for each rank is averaging three years, excuses have no validity at all and are inadequate by any standard. There is no time to waste.

With regard to fitness reports, what is really interesting are the letter grades these Marines

	MSGT	1STSGT	MGYSGT	SGTMAJ
<b>IZ/AZ PME Completion Rate</b>	77.6%	74.6%	N/A	N/A
<b>IZ/AZ Photo Submission Rate</b>	83.6%	84.1%	94.9%	98%

are receiving in areas of 'Setting The Example', 'Professional Military Education' and 'Initiative' even though they fail to meet their responsibilities in the selection process. With the advent of technology and the many internet related improvements by the Promotion Branch and MMSB, verifying submission and completion of reports is easy. Such plain talk may sound harsh, but it is necessary if we truly expect to be a force where our Marines will follow us because we lead from the front in all aspects of our career.

On a more positive note this year, as we have also experienced a strong share of Below

	<b>CY-03 MSGT</b>	<b>CY-03 1STSGT</b>	<b>CY-03 MGYSGT</b>	<b>CY-03 SGTMAJ</b>
<b>Below Zone Selection</b>	15	N/A	1	3
<b>Total Selected to Grade</b>	716	149	113	61

Zone selections, where those that put forth maximum effort were recognized as clearly 'Over and Above' being selected to the two highest grades in the Enlisted ranks.

MMSB allowed us to release information from a soon-to-be released change to the PES. This Change-7 will change some of the fitness report submission dates. You can find this in one of our articles, along with a summary of major changes to date that may need to be looked at again. With the current operation tempo and deployment schedule, it is important to realize that with Marines answering the highest call to duty, careers still move on and the best way to take care of our Marines is to ensure that we remember; 'Behind each Marine is a career and behind each career, a family'.



**Semper Fidelis**

**Enlisted Career Counselors, HQMC.**

## FIXING DATE GAPS

Reference MCO P1610.7E, PES, Chapter 8 and Appendix I

We routinely spend time with Marines trying to get their records corrected and accurately reflect all of their accomplishments, evaluations and other data contained in their Official Military Personnel File (OMPF). In previous issues of our newsletter, we discussed the audit of the OMPF. In this article, we will concentrate on fixing date gaps, which seems to be the most common occurrence.

A date gap is a period not covered by a fitness report of 31 days or more on the current PES, 45 days or more according to the old PES. There is no grandfather clause between the two systems. An Overlap is two individual reports that cover the same reporting period; the same rules apply regarding the amount of days an overlap constitutes.

Since there are several different situations that can cause date gaps or overlaps, let us examine them individually and present ways to resolve them. We have also listed important contact information at the end of this article that will enable follow-up. You can find

the format to write letters requesting the needed administrative correction to your records in the reference stated above.

It is important to note that MMSB-30 will not normally correct gaps or overlaps in the reporting period covering 30 days or less for new-style reports, or 45 days or less for old-style reports, as they are not technically considered date . The key is to be proactive and use the Marine Reported On (MRO) Worksheet (Appendix-D, PES), keeping track of reporting periods and regularly reviewing your official records to ensure accuracy.

### PROCEED DELAY AND TRAVEL

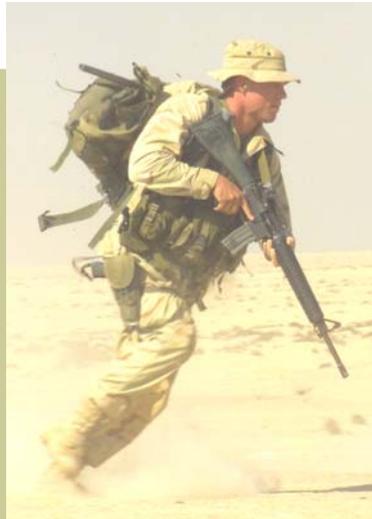
This is one of the most common reasons for a date gap. It is caused by not covering a period between duty stations while in transit during proceed, delay and travel to the gaining command. The period in transit must be covered by the subsequent report or a date gap may result if the period not covered is over 31 days or more. This type of date gap is an easy fix and action can be taken by the MRO without the

endorsement of the Reporting Senior (RS) or the Reviewing Officer (RO).

Forward a certified true copy of page 3 of the Marine's SRB/OQR under a cover letter to the CMC (MMSB-31) or (MMSB-34). Explain the applicable facts contributing to the error and request a correction to the performance record. NOTE: You can find a sample letter for this on our website as a guide to request a date change to a previously submitted report.

**OTHER DATE CORRECTIONS**

To correct date gaps not including a period of proceed, delay and travel, forward a letter endorsed and clarified as appropriate by either the RS or RO of the report to MMSB-31 or MMSB-34. Explain the applicable facts causing the error and requesting the reporting period be changed per paragraph 8007 of the PES. If the RS or RO cannot be located, forward a letter explaining the circumstances to the CMC (MMSB-31) or (MMSB-34). Include any documentation to support the requested correction and information that will assist in locating the RS or RO.



**Your official records tell your story, they are your resume to the board.**

**CHANGE OF STATUS (CS) OCCASION CODE**

Members of the IRR may have periods of non-affiliation not covered by a fitness report; therefore, this period of time during non-affiliation will not be filled. This timeframe does constitute a "valid" date gap. Upon transfer from an SMCR status to IRR status or members of IRR or MTU completing periods of ADSW of one day or more, the "CS" occasion code will be used.

**RESERVE TRAINING (RT) OCCASION CODE**

Members of the Reserve Component will receive an RT report upon completion of periods of active duty lasting 12 – 30 days in duration. RT reports may be done in addition to Annual Reserve (AR) reports. RT reports are not considered when reviewing performance records

for date gaps.

**ADMINISTRATIVE FILLERS AFTER RELEASE FROM ACTIVE DUTY OR DISCHARGE**

Prior service Marines returning to the Active Component may request an administrative filler for a date gap caused by a previous release from active duty or discharge. The MRO's current command must submit the request to the CMC (MMSB-31) under cover letter with certified true copies, as applicable, of page 3 of the SRB or OQR, Enlistment/Reenlistment Document Armed Forces of the United States (DD Form 4), and the Certificate of Discharge or Release from Active Duty (DD Form 214).

**FITNESS REPORT ON OMPF BUT NOT ON MBS**

If a Fitness Report appears in the P-Folder (Performance Folder) of the OMPF but not the Master Brief Sheet (MBS), forward a written request to the CMC (MMSB-31) or (MMSB-34) requesting the report be placed on the MBS. Ensure the letter identifies the reporting period and occasion.

**FITNESS REPORT ON OMPF DIFFERENT THAN DATA ON MBS**

When the MBS does not accurately reflect the information from a particular report as it appears in the OMPF, send a request for correction to the CMC (MMSB-31) or (MMSB-34) explaining the error and include a copy of the MRO's MBS.

**OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE FITNESS REPORT CORRECTIONS**

Submit requests for other administrative Fitness Report corrections by correspondence, via the RS or RO, to the CMC (MMSB-31) or (MMSB-34). The requested change must be *significant, fully justified, and endorsed as valid by either the RS or RO*. Simply stating, "Error was result of admin oversight," is not a

justification; the RS or RO of record needs to explain the applicable reason(s) for the error. Refer to paragraph 8007 of the PES for further information on corrections.

Note: MMSB can make administrative corrections to Section A except for item 9a and 9b (Duty Preference Code/Description) or item 8c (Status). MMSB can also correct statements of fact in Sections B, C, I & K that are devoid of opinion and interpretive comment. All other corrections (i.e. attribute grades and evaluative comments) are inherently judgmental and fall under the purview of the Board for Correction of Naval Records (BCNR). For more information, use the following link to the MMER website.



[https://inweb1.manpower.usmc.mil/manpower/mi/mra\\_ofct.nsf/MMER](https://inweb1.manpower.usmc.mil/manpower/mi/mra_ofct.nsf/MMER)

### SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENTS

If the RS or RO is subsequently made aware of new facts that reflect upon the performance of the MRO during the reporting period after the submission of the fitness report, the reporting official can request that the supplemental material be added to the fitness report. Supplemental comments will not serve to change evaluative markings in sections D – H, or the RO's comparative assessment (item 3) in section K.

To request the addition of supplemental comments, the following steps are necessary.

- Place supplemental comments on an Addendum Page
- Create a cover letter that justifies why the material needs to be added to the report. Limit supplemental material requests to factual matters.
- If the supplemental comments are, by necessity, derogatory because the new facts surface a previously unknown adversity, the reporting official making the request must first refer the comments to the MRO for acknowledgement per the provisions of Chapter 5.
- Requests from the RS must have the endorsement of the RO of record.

- Submit request to CMC (MMSB-31) or (MMSB-34) as appropriate.

### DATE GAP CAUSED BY A MISSING FITNESS REPORT

Complete Section-A of a Fitness Report, NAVMC 10835A (except items 5 through 8).

Send the report to the RS under a cover letter requesting the completion of the Fitness Report. NOTE: You can find a sample letter for this on our website as a guide to the MRO's current command to request the completion of a missing fitness report from a previous command.

RS will complete and forward the report to the Reviewing Officer of record at the time the report should have been done and provide a copy to the MRO.

RO will complete and forward the report to CMC (MMSB-31) or (MMSB-34).

CMC (MMSB-30) can accomplish RO action for reports that are more than a year old (calculated from the "To" date to present) and not adverse.

### ADVERSE REPORTS

If the report is adverse, it must be processed as a normal adverse report (PES Manual, Chapter 5). When the MRO and the reporting officials are no longer co-located, forward the report to the CMC (MMSB-31) or (MMSB-34) with the name and SSN of the RO.

### CERTIFIED TRUE COPIES



Copies of original reports are acceptable only if they are over one year old and ALL pages are certified true by one of the reporting officials (RS or RO) shown in items 10 or 11 of section A of the report. The reporting official should write or stamp "Certified True Copy" at the bottom of each page and then sign and print his/her name next to each stamp. Reports less than one year old must be a complete and original report.

### FAXING MISSING FITNESS REPORTS

Fax copies of missing fitness reports are **not acceptable** for placement in the Marine's OMPF, except:

- When MMSB contacts the Marine for a fitness report that has been requested from a

selection board.

- ❑ The fitness report is deemed critical to a reenlistment or selection board decision.
- ❑ The faxed report must be complete, clear and legible, and have all reporting officials' certifications on the copy as applicable.

### REPORTING SENIOR IGNORES REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF FITNESS REPORT

If the RS fails to respond to your request within 30 days, forward a copy of the correspondence originally sent to the RS soliciting the fitness report and an original Fitness Report, NAVMC 10835A, with items 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, and 11 of Section-A completed, to the CMC (MMSB-31) or (MMSB-34). Include any known information that may be helpful in locating the RS or RO in the letter.

### LOCATING THE RS OR RO

Exhaust all means of locating the RS and RO, including:

- ❑ Working through the HQMC Worldwide Locator, DSN 278-3942 or Commercial (703) 784-3942.
- ❑ Contact the MRO's present and previous command for the RS/RO's address.
- ❑ Contact other Marines serving with the RS/RO during the reporting period.

If you still cannot locate the RS or RO, forward an original fitness report, NAVMC 10835A, with items 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, and 11 of section A completed, under cover letter to the CMC (MMSB-31) or (MMSB-34). In your letter, include what you have done to find the reporting officials and any known information that may

help to locate them.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### MMSB-31 POLICY AND RESEARCH UNIT



Assists *active component* personnel with date gaps, administrative corrections, and retrieval of late and missing reports. MMSB-31 phone number (PES Helpline).

Toll free 1-877-301-9953  
DSN 278-3430/5689/3905  
Commercial (703) 784-3430/5689/3905

#### MMSB-34 RESERVE MATTERS UNIT

Assists *reserve component* personnel with date gaps, administrative corrections, and retrieval of late and missing reports.

#### PHONE NUMBERS

DSN 278-3970  
Commercial (703) 784-3970



#### MAILING ADDRESS

Commandant Of The Marine Corps  
Headquarters US Marine Corps  
(MMSB-31 or MMSB-34),  
2008 Elliot Rd, Quantico VA 22134-5030.



#### MMSB-31 AND MMSB-34 FAX NUMBER

DSN 278-5688  
Commercial (703) 784-5688



**By MSgt Lund**  
**Head, Enlisted Career Counseling Unit**



*In accordance with Page 5, Section J of your fitness report, all MRO's are required to be provided a signed copy of the fitness report by the Reporting Senior on or prior to the day the fitness report was signed by the Reporting Senior.*

*Always keep a signed copy of each report you receive, it will be of great help to resolve any date gaps that may incur.*

### J. CERTIFICATION

1. I CERTIFY that to the best of my knowledge and belief all entries made hereon are true and without prejudice or partiality and that I have provided a signed copy of this report to the Manne Reported on.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of Reporting Senior)

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(Date in YYYYMMDD format)

## STOP LOSS EFFECT ON PROMOTIONS

The recent implementation of the Corps-wide stop loss policy has created concerns over the potential slowdown of Enlisted SNCO Promotions. Though stop loss will keep Marines on active duty who otherwise would have departed due to retirement or expiration of active service, manpower planners are generating promotion allocations as if those Marines actually departed the Corps.

For example: MOS "XXXX" has five corporals with an EAS in April and all five are affected by stop loss. Since these Marines will not depart in April as planned, the MOS will appear to be at full strength leading to no promotions. However manpower planners will treat the MOS as if these Marines actually left the Corps and publish a cutting score in April that promotes five Marines to Corporal. This action will occur at each grade.

Simply put, stop loss could have a bigger effect if not carefully managed. It will have no impact on Marines approaching service limits or retirement however. As with the others choosing to separate on their own, they are still eligible for consideration for promotion.

Manpower planners will develop SNCO promotion allocations in the same manner. SNCOs affected by stop loss will be considered as an imminent loss to the Corps, leaving a vacancy for another motivated Marine to fill. Manpower planners have adjusted promotion plans to account for those Marines affected by stop loss, and have adapted the current promotion system in order to continue promotions as if stop loss was not in effect.

While MarAdmin 007/03 allowed for Marines and Commanders to request cancellation of FMCR (transfers to Fleet Marine Corps Reserve), only a small and carefully selected number of cancellations are actually occurring. Most Marines are receiving extensions. Therefore, while retiring at a later

date, they will still continue to be projected as losses. Because the number of approved cancellations of FMCR is so small, they do not change the overall grade strength of MOS's. There is no significant impact of the projected losses on MOS community. As long as a Marine has an intended FMCR date, there remains a projected opening for the best and most fully qualified Marine to be selected to replace that individual.

Stop loss will not have any significant impact on selection allocations. Selection allocations are calculated based on projected losses and needs of the MOS. Marines who were projected losses before stop loss will for the most part will remain projected losses throughout.



Marines that were intending on separating voluntarily, may still do so soon after the stop loss is lifted.



**By Capt Vasquez, MPP-20  
& MSgt Horn, Enlisted Career Counselor**

## RECENT CHANGES TO THE PES

In 1998 the Marine Corps introduced the current Performance Evaluation System (PES), MCO P1610.7E. This system was introduced as a complete change that required a fresh approach to reporting. With the new system, came its 'Marking Philosophy' which among other guidance stated clearly, "There is no place for welcome aboard reports or other techniques that skew performance records". We still continue to see many of these 'welcome aboard' reports and feel that it is necessary to bring this to the front burner again.

The fundamental concepts of the present PES are accuracy, accountability, simplicity, and consistency of policy and evaluation methods. Like any new system, changes and enhancements are both necessary as well as to be expected. Since the implementation of the current PES, there have been several changes that have come about that do impact how our Marines are considered competitively.

Selection boards in 1999 found it a challenge to interpret individual competitiveness as relative values and profiles were not established. The system was new and it would take a few reports to establish profile data. It has been over three years since the present system was implemented, and profile data pertaining to the report is clearly visible on all Master Brief Sheets. We have listed the most

significant changes to the original order that pertain to Active Duty Career Marines.

Change-1 was published on 22 October 1999 and released as MarAdmin 474/99. It stated that Section-I would include a word picture about the 'Professional Character' of the MRO. These comments help to define the Marine and provide a more detailed picture about the 'Whole Marine'. Put simply, these comments were designed to add depth to the observation in bringing out for the reader those professional attributes of the MRO that may not be known merely reading the applicable marked PARS wording. This change was not intended as a license to return to the previously existing flowery style of writing, but specific quantitative information be included. Even though Change-1 has been in effect for quite a while, it is important to review it as we seem to routinely observe these comments as missing.

Change-5 was published on 16 January 2003 and modified the Fitness Report submission schedule for both E-7's and E-8's. Since the E-8/E-9 selection board has been moved from a CY to FY rotation, the board now convenes in October vice January. Therefore it was to adjust the submission schedule of the reports. Change-7 is on its way and should be released very soon. Once Change-7 is released, the fitness report submission schedule table should look like this:

<b>Fitness Report Submission Table</b> (Including Change-7 to PES/MCO 1610.7E)			
CURRENT GRADE	ACTIVE	RESERVE	ACTIVE RESERVE
▶ SGT	March	September	September
▶ SSGT	December	September	September
▶ GYSGT	June	September	September
▶ 1STSGT & MSGT	June	September	September
▶ SGTMAJ & MGYSGT	September	May	June
▶ WO AND CWO	April	October	October
▶ 2 <sup>ND</sup> LT	January & July	April	N/A
▶ 1 <sup>ST</sup> LT	October & April	October	October
▶ CAPT	May	September	June
▶ MAJOR	May	September	June
▶ LTCOL	May	June	June
▶ COL	May	July	July
▶ BGEN	June	June	N/A

With the shortened amount of time between the E-8/E-9 selection boards this year, it is important for Marines to ensure proper accountability of their reports in their OMPFs.

Change-6 was published on 16 January 2003, and required the inclusion of Operational Risk Management (ORM) in Section-I of the fitness reports. This change applies to all those that are specifically tasked to provide Operational Risk Assessments as part of their duties. Additional information about ORM can be found in MCO 3500.27A, and at MCI's website by

downloading the Operational Risk Management Book (ORM 1-0). If your duties do not involve ORM, it does not lessen your overall competitiveness as you always compete with your peers. Additionally, during the selection process, it is the overall concept that is important in determining *'Best and Fully Qualified'* and not a silver bullet that will get you over the edge.



**By GySgt Payne**  
**Enlisted Career Counselor**

## RECOVERING FROM ADVERSITY

Selection Boards are tasked to select *'the best and fully qualified'* Marines to assume the responsibilities of the next higher grade. In this process, the overall competitiveness of all Marines considered is what is important. Not all eligible Marines will be selected for promotion. Marines compete with their peers for the allocations during each year's selection process.

Marines do make mistakes and there is no zero-defect elimination process. It is important to remember that any adverse material will be permanently included in your official records and be briefed at every step of your career. Adverse or derogatory material does not go away, and there is no statute of limitations in time.

We routinely counsel Marines that may have slipped and look for ways for that to recover in their careers. The most common question seems to be, *"Can I recover from adverse material, and how long does it take?"* Stated bluntly, there is no time limit—everything depends on the overall record of the Marine being considered against their peers for the allocations for that specific year. It is the overall record that will have to make the case for the Marine. Marines do recover all the time but effort has to be made. The table below illustrates Marines who

were selected towards the grades mentioned, that had some form of adverse or derogatory material in their official records, not necessarily in grade. This is evidence that Marines do recover and that *'Zero-Defect Mentality'* does not apply. This does not mean that anything and everything is okay or tolerable, but with persevering work and effort, you can overcome a stumble in your career.

Driving under the influence (DUI) and driving while intoxicated (DWI) were among the most common incidents. In the process of recovery, several questions are raised by those entrusted with the selection of Marines for promotion, or in the process of determining eligibility for retention. What we have presented below is a short list that can point the way to recovery for both promotion and retention.

- ☐ The competitiveness of the Marine's performance before the incident; your overall record is considered and hence, quality observation before the incident will allow a

<b>MARINES SELECTED WITH SOME ADVERSE OR DEROGATORY MATERIAL</b>					
	<b>SSGT</b>	<b>GYSGT</b>	<b>MSGT</b>	<b>MGYSGT</b>	<b>SGTMAJ</b>
<b>CY-01</b>	477	174	50	20	3
<b>CY-02</b>	527	231	47	10	3
<b>FY-03</b>	N/A	N/A	53	5	1

quicker bounce back to recovery.

- ❑ The nature of the incident and the professional maturity of the Marine at the time of the incident. There are some incidents which really bring into question the character of the individual and their ability to make sound judgments as a leader. On the same note, it is harder to recover from incidents as you gain seniority, as higher standards of professional maturity are expected from those entrusted to lead.
- ❑ Any history of adverse or derogatory performance. If there is a pattern of adverse or derogatory incidents, especially of a similar nature, it will be harder to recover from as it is a negative trend that shows that the Marine has not learned and continues to show willful neglect for good order and discipline among other issues.
- ❑ The severity to which the Marine was held accountable. Here it is important to mention that positive comments by reporting officials may leave the door to recovery open wider, as it can show the incident to be isolated and out of character. Relief from primary duties and statements that show loss of confidence by reporting officials can worsen the path to recovery. On the other hand, the opposite can work for the Marine in bouncing back strongly.
- ❑ The acceptance of responsibility by the Marine shows professional maturity and the desire to move forward. We often find defiant rebuttals submitted that may not make this point. Remember, selection boards will read all material to include your rebuttals and use it to determine your overall competitiveness. Be careful and never let your emotions override what is in your best professional interests.
- ❑ The Marine's performance after the incident. On this note, recovery is usually best where you may have slipped, as it removes some doubt from those questioning any aspect of your performance or character. When you are the subject of any adversity, you need to remember that others may now have more to offer than you have in that area. Seek to do more elsewhere. Seek collateral duties and improve the performance curve of those duties already assigned. Improve your PFT and PME and always seek to do more.

- ❑ Reduce movement as much as possible. Movement or orders to another duty or duty station may result in nonobserved reports that do not add anything new or positive in nature for a while. This is not always possible, as you may be up for a move or at the end of your present tour. If this is the case, since each case is different, call us to discuss ways to improve your overall competitiveness.

The bottom line is that just as promotions are not an entitlement and must be earned, recovery from any incident must also be a process you approach with acceptance of what has happened, and with the determination to begin tipping the scales in your favor. There is no silver bullet to recovery; it is a step-by-step process that takes focused effort. We hope the tips given will assist you in drawing a map towards recovery and also help your Marines recover. Good Marines stumble too; it is important that we show them the path to move on from wherever they may be.



**The bottom line is that just as promotions are not an entitlement and must be earned, recovery from any incident must also be a process you approach with acceptance of what has happened, and with the determination to begin tipping the scales in your favor.**



***By GySgt Fuller  
Enlisted Career Counselor***



## MMEA-64

### Enlisted Career Counseling Unit (MMEA-64)

#### Toll Free Phone

800.833.2320

#### Commercial Phone

703.784.9241

#### DSN Phone

278.9241

WE ARE ON THE  
WEB,  
GO TO...

WWW.USMC.MIL

THEN TO THE  
CAREER LINK

THEN TO  
ENLISTED CAREER  
COUNSELING



**Recuperating  
and wanting  
back in!**

## ON COMBAT REPORTS

The criteria for combat fitness reports is contained in MarAdmin 612/01, and MCO P1610.7E, change 3, para 6003.5. Bottom line: Marines receiving fire, Marines returning fire; Marines supporting other units with combat arms fire, Marines in direct combat service support of those under fire and returning fire in a hot fire zone. Ultimately, we need to rely on the good judgment of our commanding officers and reporting officials to ensure the accuracy and credibility of combat reports. The comments portion of reports needs to contain concrete examples of the nature of the combat and the MRO's efforts and actions in that combat situation.

The criteria in MarAdmin 612/01 may apply to your shipbound support Marines. Certainly your aviators flying missions are a different story. If at some time the admiral or the ship's CO determines circumstances warrant the awarding combat action ribbons to the ship's company and eligible embarked Marines then combat reports are called for. That then becomes the commander's call, and the important thing is the report record with concrete examples of the MRO's efforts and accomplishments in that combat environment.

Until such time as forces go ashore and engage hostile forces, there seem to be no circumstances where Marines would warrant combat reports. That being said, certainly any air crews that are flying missions off shipping, in support of ground forces and coming under fire or returning fire

are a different story. The bottom line is, we need to rely on the good judgment of our commanders and reporting officials to ensure the accuracy and creditability of the reports. That means the comment portions of combat reports explain with concrete examples the nature of the combat, and MRO's efforts and actions in combat. Para 4 of the MarAdmin explains direct support as providing fire with supporting arms or providing combat service support. A real time example of the latter is the case of our Marines running and providing resupply convoys to the forces closing on Baghdad. They are being fired at and/or returning fire.

To be considered for a combat fitness report, the MRO must be serving in a project crisis code area as designated by the CJCS ... AND... be subjected to hostile fire in combat operations against an enemy or in direct support of those engaged in hostile fire with an enemy. Was the MRO under fire, returning fire, directly supporting those under fire with supporting arms, in direct service support within the immediate combat area, or in a leadership or staff support role directly coordinating actions in the combat area? A "Yes" to any of these questions would justify a combat report. It is the commander's responsibility to determine if a combat fitness report is justified. The RS must comment on the nature of the combat operation(s) and the MRO's actions in combat operation(s).

